

\*

Shaking the echo from my beaten hide  
I hear his answering: watch.

My boyish anger strangling inside old scars  
made slack to ease the silence rumbling now.

Today I let the gift go back: answering.

\*

A use: as generals a horse  
my customers attend this desk  
race me in a chair  
to hurt the wood, dismount  
bold treaties in each hand.

I too, am invisible  
dressed to outwit my colleagues  
to hunt the issue, the gist  
: a million years above a street  
whose one young maple  
screams insensibly with reds and yellows  
oranges and blues, it cannot hear  
the ease that comes from dying  
from experience  
from being safe.

-- Simon Perchik

i have no quarrel with  
silence / the sky  
is low today / outside  
my window a beer-faced beggar  
belches his way through  
green alleys  
-- lamplight on my bed  
covers old shadows  
and for the first time  
i understand the heroes  
marching in twos down the  
wide streets / big drums  
following little ones

-- marcus j grapes

New Orleans, La.